



U.S. Department of Justice

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FREEPORT MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL GUN AND DRUG CHARGES

ROCKFORD -- PATRICK J. FITZGERALD, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; ANDREW L. TRAVER, Special Agent-In-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives; LARRY G. TRENT, Director of the Illinois State Police; RICHARD MEYERS, Winnebago County Sheriff; JERRY WHITMORE, Chief of the Freeport Police Department; and STEVEN PUGH, Chief of the Rockford Police Department, today made the following announcement:

ERIC WAGNER, 33 (DOB: 6/10/1972), of 102 West Douglas, Freeport Illinois, pled guilty today in federal court in Rockford to gun trafficking and drug dealing charges.

In pleading guilty, Wagner admitted that he was familiar with an individual who was cooperating with the BATFE ("CI"). Wagner knew the CI was a convicted felon. Wagner admitted in the plea agreement that on November 23, 2004, he met with the CI at Wagner Hunting and Fishing Supplies in Freeport, Illinois, where Wagner worked. Because Wagner knew the CI did not have a Firearm Owner's Identification (FOID) card, he filled out an ATF form illegally using the CI's wife's FOID card information. Wagner told the CI to sign the CI's wife's name on the ATF form and then sold the CI a .38 caliber revolver, along with ammunition. Wagner also pleaded guilty to selling 27.7 grams of marijuana to the CI on November 23, 2004. As part of the plea agreement, Wagner also admitted that between December 7, 2004 and April 22, 2005, he sold the CI eight additional firearms and an additional 157.2 grams of marijuana.

Sentencing for Wagner will be conducted on February 3, 2005, at 9 a.m. Wagner faces a possible maximum sentence of up to 10 years in prison on the gun charge, and up to 5 years in prison on the drug trafficking charge. In addition, Wagner faces fine of up to \$250,000 on each charge, a period of supervised release of at least two and up to three years following his release from prison, and any restitution ordered by the court. The actual sentence will be determined by the United States District Court, guided by the United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The case was investigated by the Rockford office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, & Explosives with the assistance of the Freeport Police Department, the Illinois State Police State Line Area Narcotics Team, the Winnebago County Sheriff's Department, the Rockford Police Department, and the Rockford-Winnebago County Metro Narcotics Unit. The case is being prosecuted in federal court by Assistant United States Attorney Joseph C. Pedersen.

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